

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Claims 1-21 were pending in this application. Applicants have canceled all of claims 1-21 and replaced them with new claims 22-41. Accordingly, claims 22-41 will be pending herein upon entry of this Amendment, of which claims 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41 are independent claims. For the reasons stated below, Applicant respectfully submits that all claims pending in this application are in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action mailed on April 7, 2004, the title and the abstract of the present invention were objected to and the specification was required to be corrected. Claims 10-12 and 17-20 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 5, 7, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,862,504 to Nomura ("Nomura"). Claims 1-4, 6, 8, 9, 15, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nomura in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,317,713 to Tenpaku ("Tenpaku"). Finally, claims 13 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nomura in view of Tenpaku, and European Patent Application No. EP 0 821 344 A2 to Nishimura et al. ("Nishimura"). To the extent these grounds of rejection might still be applied to claims presently pending in this application, they are respectfully traversed.

Newly added claims 22-41 have been rewritten from original claims 10-12 and 17-20 to include all of the limitations of the base claims and the intervening claims. For example, new

independent claims 22, 23, 25, and 28 are rewritten from original claims 10, 11, 18, and 17, respectively, to include all of the limitations of the base claims and the intervening claims. New independent claims 26 and 29 are rewritten from original claims 29. Applicants have also rewritten original claims 10 and 11 to include the features of original claims 4-9. For example, new independent claims 31 and 32 include the features of claims 10 and 4, and claims 11 and 4, respectively. New independent claims 34 and 35 include the features of original claims 10 and 4, and claims 11 and 5, respectively. Similarly, in addition to including the limitations of original claims 10 and 11, new independent claims 36 and 37, 38 and 39, and 40 and 41 further include, respectively, the features of original claims 6, 8, and 9.

Accordingly, Applicants believe that newly added claims 22-41 are in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing all of the claims in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or determine that any further action is desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

SHAW PITTMAN LLP
1650 Tysons Boulevard
McLean, VA 22102
Tel: 703/770-7900

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Respectfully submitted,

KAZUYUKI ASHIMURA

By Michael D. Bednarek
Michael D. Bednarek
Registration No. 32,329

Attachments: Abstract

MDB/CYM/dkp

Customer No. 28970